UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
26th meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 October 1992
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Miss DIOP (Vice-Chairman)	(Senegal)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 88: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

92-57342 6319S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/47/SR.26
23 November 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/344, A/47/440-S/24558)

(a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR (continued) (A/47/288-E/1992/94)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/187, A/47/291-E/1992/95, A/47/337, A/47/420-S/24519, A/47/455, 528, 539, 553, 554, 562 and 573)

AGENDA ITEM 88: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/47/531)

1. Mr. VALENZUELA (Honduras) said that the 129 natural disasters that had occurred worldwide from January to September 1992 demonstrated that disasters were becoming more frequent, in conjunction with climate changes that altered their nature. Their consequences were catastrophic for the fragile economies of the developing countries, which needed the assistance of the United Nations and donor countries to help them deal with the emergency situations. Recognition must be given in that connection to the valuable contribution of international agencies working in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and non-governmental organizations such as Caritas and CARE.

2. The proclamation of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction had been an occasion for intensifying UNDRO activities and for reflecting on the United Nations capability to prevent and mitigate natural disasters. Since its establishment in March 1972, UNDRO had acted to coordinate and exchange information on assistance needs and contributions from donor countries, in addition to mobilizing and coordinating the assistance of the agencies of the United Nations system, for which it organized missions, raised funds for assistance and advised Governments. However, UNDRO did not have enough financial resources to respond adequately to the continuous emergency requests from all over the world. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had clearly acknowledged that fact in many resolutions requesting an increase in UNDRO resources.

3. At the first Ministerial Conference of the Countries of the Central American Isthmus and the Caribbean Community, held in Honduras in January 1992, a permanent mechanism was established to promote greater cooperation between the two regions on joint initiatives in areas like the environment and natural disasters. One commendable initiative was the prevention and rehabilitation training programme being executed by UNDRO in Central America with UNDP support. Regular consultations were being held in

(Mr. Valenzuela, Honduras)

Honduras, primarily to prevent and mitigate winter floods, and the implementation of regional projects was being encouraged, like the network of silos for the storage of basic grains and other such projects intended to strengthen national rapid-response capability. However, those efforts had to be supplemented by support from the international community.

4. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

5. Mr. CASTANEDA (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), said that humanitarian assistance needs were not simply national or local problems but a priority for the international community. The United Nations had an important role to play through its own programmes and as a catalyst and unifier of the efforts of Governments and non-governmental organizations. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should permit a more efficient and effective response by the United Nations in cases of natural disaster. El Salvador unreservedly supported the work the Department had done thus far, in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States. He expressed his solidarity with Benin, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Vanuatu and Yemen, nations which were living through difficult times and needed the support of the international community.

6. In Central America, there had been satisfactory implementation during the period 1987-1991 of the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America (PEC), which had established a frame of reference, accepted by the Governments and the General Assembly, for focusing the attention of the international community on the measures required for reconciliation and peace in Central America. It had also facilitated the shaping of a consensus in the region for the consolidation of peace on a firm and lasting basis, had strengthened the institutions and forums for integration and the national agencies, and had contributed to the mobilization of external cooperation resources. Despite the advances made, it had been thought advisable to make changes in the PEC with a view to adjusting the existing strategy to the new dynamics of the process of integration in Central America, as a way of supporting peacemaking and the consolidation of peace, as well as the agricultural and livestock sector, the communications and energy infrastructure, social development, the environment, and stronger institutional mechanisms. What was needed was to channel any remaining resources into two new programme areas: the modernization of production, and manpower training. The PEC was an integral component in the consolidation of peace, democracy and development in Central America.

7. A concomitant of the Peace Agreement concluded at Mexico City in January 1992 was the urgent need for the political, social and economic reconstruction of El Salvador, where the level of violence in recent years had

(Mr. Castaneda, El Salvador)

reduced productivity and living standards, destroyed a large part of the economic and social infrastructure, and accelerated the degradation of the environment. El Salvador was going through a difficult transitional period given the limited funds available for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and it was studying the possibility of requesting the General Assembly in the near future to decide to provide assistance to the country for its reconstruction and development.

8. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) praised the activities of UNDRO and underscored the need to increase both the resources allocated to it in the regular budget of the United Nations and the voluntary contributions under the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. That was the only way of preventing damage caused by natural disasters from frustrating the efforts to achieve sustainable and environmentally sound development. Benin proposed considering the possibility of incorporating in the regular budget of the United Nations the 40 per cent of the staff costs of UNDRO which used to be financed from voluntary contributions, in order to remove the element of uncertainty from such important work.

9. Benin was not completely satisfied with the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/337), because, even though the floods of July and August 1991 had caused loss of life, property damage, displacement of population and destruction of crops and livestock, the section on Benin made no mention of the provisions of paragraphs 6 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 45/230. Therefore, through the Committee, he requested that the Secretary-General submit a report on the implementation of that resolution in respect of Benin, in order to meet the need for reconstruction resulting from those disasters, particularly the floods of the past 10 years, and to implement specific prevention programmes. He wished to make it clear that Benin was not rejecting that section of the report, but rather asking that the provisions of the resolution be taken into consideration. His delegation reiterated its gratitude to the United Nations agencies and States which had given Benin support in the form of donations and contributions to deal with the emergencies, and hoped that they would continue to do so.

10. Mr. TOROU (Chad) said that, on 22 May 1992, in view of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Chad and after consulting with opposition parties, unions and associations for the protection of human rights, the Head of State of Chad, had established an open Government which had formulated a programme of action. In order to promote economic development, a master plan for the year 2000 would be executed, focusing on privatization, liberalization of the economy and sectoral development, including taxation and austerity measures as well. With the support of France, the army was being restructured, and troop strength would be reduced from 50,000 to 25,000. Such measures, taken under difficult political conditions, had already caused social repercussions, but they could not be postponed without risking even harsher measures in the future.

(Mr. Torou, Chad)

11. Moreover, cotton, the second most important sector of the Chadian economy, had been affected by the unfavourable international economic environment. The restructuring of the cotton sector had reduced producer income, and factory closings had diminished the people's buying power. Given that difficult situation, he hoped that the international community would continue its efforts in accordance with the decisions taken at the round tables on assistance to Chad held in Geneva in 1982, 1985 and 1990. The schedule for sectoral consultations on the themes selected at the last round table had been changed, and his delegation would shortly be submitting a draft decision that would constitute the legal basis for those activities; he hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

12. Mrs. RAHOLINIRNA RADAFIARISOA (Madagascar) emphasized the need to increase efforts to achieve the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Madagascar attached the utmost importance to the planning and execution of disaster preparedness programmes, which helped to mitigate the effects of disasters, and welcomed the decision adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development relating to management of human settlements in disaster-prone areas. Likewise, her delegation took note with interest of the proposal in the Tampere Declaration for the convening in 1993 of a conference to negotiate an intergovernmental convention on disaster communications.

13. In order to strengthen international mechanisms for disaster relief and mitigation, it was necessary to intensify the transfer of technology, experience and relevant information from donor countries to disaster-prone countries by facilitating access to publications and training and holding seminars and workshops. Madagascar supported the proposal made at the fourth meeting of Officials in Charge of National Emergency Relief Services to organize a workshop on the use of military assistance in relief operations. The international conferences held in 1992 and those scheduled for the near future had development as a common denominator; however, natural disasters could wipe out, overnight, the progress and development which had taken years to achieve. Consequently, any development strategy should include measures to reduce the vulnerability of those countries and strengthen their disaster-response capability. Madagascar was currently suffering from drought and a plague of locusts. Those scourges were having a considerable impact on the agricultural sector, the foundation of the national economy, and were threatening its food security. For that reason, her delegation was asking the international community to support the Government's efforts to confront those problems and to help strengthen its national capacity to manage disasters.

14. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that on 30 April 1991 the southern part of his country had been struck by the worst cyclone in living memory; some 140,000 people had been killed, millions had been left homeless and the infrastructure had been seriously damaged. UNDRO had played a laudable role

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

in making the international community aware of the needs arising as a result of that terrible disaster. The tragic experience of Bangladesh demonstrated the enormous importance of disaster preparedness and prevention in disaster-prone areas. It was essential to extend disaster prevention and preparedness measures in national and regional plans and to improve early warning and information systems. Therefore, Bangladesh welcomed the initiative to establish a central register of disaster management capacities.

15. The scarcity of funds for emergency relief operations was a key issue for the United Nations system and the international community. Given that the amount of resources required varied from one situation to another, it would be appropriate to review contingency plans on a continuing basis and to stockpile foodstuffs, medicines and other essential supplies in cases of disaster. His delegation also felt that all institutional restructuring in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance should aim at full utilization of the capacities already available and, in that context, underscored the importance of the UNDRO practice of presenting unified and consolidated appeals in emergencies.

16. Coordination of that type of assistance required close cooperation between the authorities of the affected countries and United Nations officials and other relief agencies. Given the need for timely information, it would be useful to establish close cooperation between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and donor Governments. His delegation welcomed the provisions of the Tampere Declaration identifying the need for communications and remote sensing in disaster management. The joint UNDRO/UNDP disaster management training programmes were of primary importance. It was beneficial to promote a local disaster mitigation "culture" with indigenous roots.

17. The number of persons at risk from disaster increased with population growth. Furthermore, since the least privileged people continued to move into zones of ever higher risk, disasters would continue to have increasingly serious consequences, unless prevention and preparedness measures were correspondingly increased. In other words, prevention and preparedness measures and the degree of vulnerability of countries exposed to natural disasters could not be dissociated from their general economic conditions or their level of development. In conclusion, during the current International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, there was an urgent need for a comprehensive plan of action involving all relevant United Nations bodies and utilizing the experience and comparative advantage of the entire system.

18. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that he was confident that the incorporation of UNDRO into the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would achieve the intended goal of enabling the United Nations system to respond quickly and in a coordinated fashion to natural and man-made disasters. UNDRO had been established in 1972 to coordinate the nascent international aid to western Africa and the Horn of

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

Africa, which at that time were undergoing great crises. At the same time, FAO had been instrumental in mitigating the effects of the great Sahelian drought and the Ethiopian crisis by organizing the first multidisciplinary, multidonor missions and beginning a fruitful partnership with the WFP. In 1975 the Global Informaton and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture had been established to keep FAO abreast of the food supply situation throughout the world.

19. Inasmuch as food emergencies had become increasingly complex and required more intensive coordination of international assistance, a new phase had begun in which UNDRO and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would play an essential role in the assessment, estimate and timely delivery of food and other relief supplies and services. There were plans to further develop disaster management training programmes, which would be of great importance in both the short and the long term, and to strengthen the United Nations International Emergency Network (UNIENET) as part of the Global Information and Early Warning System. UNIENET would thus provide continually updated information, facilitating the work of FAO. In summary, FAO was committed to active collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and support for the innovative measures begun by UNDRO.

20. Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique) called attention to the great efforts being deployed by the Government and the international community to alleviate the serious situation in Mozambique, and laid particular stress on the work of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, which had become ever more demanding and complex. The lack of means remained the most serious problem facing developing countries, which could not mitigate the consequences of natural disasters as long as the overall problem of economic development remained unsolved. In its 18 years of independence Mozambique had suffered different kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made. In the late 1970s the country had been hit by severe cyclones and devastating floods that destroyed thousands of tonnes of crops and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless. The cycle of floods had later been followed, in 1983 and 1984, by a prolonged drought. Moreover, in 1991 southern Africa had suffered the worst drought in living memory, Mozambique being the most affected in the entire region. The terrible consequences of such natural disasters had been aggravated by the scourge of war, which had caused more than a million people to leave the country, and rendered millions more homeless.

21. To tackle that very difficult situation the Government had created a National Executive Commission for the Emergency, which was working closely with the United Nations Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations. With the intensification of the war in the late 1980s and early 1990s, operational activities, particularly in the more remote areas of the country, had had to overcome serious difficulties arising from the problem of security. None the less, the staff of the United Nations and other national and international organizations continued to perform their duties.

(Mr. Afonso, Mozambique)

22. On 4 October 1992, the President of the Republic of Mozambique and the RENAMO leader had signed the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, in Rome, with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace, the enhancement of democracy and the promotion true national reconciliation in Mozambique. Protocol VII of the Agreement referred to the holding of a conference of donor countries and organizations with the aim of obtaining financial support for the electoral process, emergency and rehabilitation programmes for refugees and displaced persons and support for the demobilized armed forces from both sides. The end of hostilities had been an important step and an opportunity to launch a comprehensive contingency plan to rescue the country from 16 years of untold suffering. The plan should be broken down into short-, medium- and long-term programmes consonant with a set of priorities in various sectors of social and economic life. The Government had created a national commission to assess ways and means of mobilizing international support for the national programme of economic and social rehabilitation.

23. Mr. MBINDA (Angola) reiterated his Government's profound gratitude for the international community's support for the restoration of peace in Angola. Angola had great natural resources and an adequate socio-economic infrastructure, but 16 years of war and destabilization had so deeply transformed its economic and social prospects that it needed the help of the international community. In 1987 and 1990 the Government had developed action plans designed to promote economic and financial recovery, but the continuation of the war had caused them to fail.

24. Despite the attitude taken by UNITA after the elections, peace and reconciliation were being consolidated, creating new hope; the Government had drawn up a programme that sought to rebuild key sectors of the economy and to encourage foreign investment, giving priority to reorganization of the rural areas, so that the country could become self-sufficient in food, and reintegration of refugees, displaced persons and demobilized military personnel. Unless support was forthcoming from the international community, it would not be possible to implement the programme; he therefore hoped that the draft resolution to be submitted on the subject would receive the Committee's full support.

25. Mr. Piriz Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

26. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon) said that it had not been possible in 1992 to sustain the economic progress achieved in 1991. The Lebanese pound had suffered severe depreciation, resulting in hyperinflation and social unrest; so that coping with the economic and financial crisis had become the authorities' top priority. With scant resources, the Lebanese Government had to counteract the devastating effects of 16 years of conflict and invasion and tackle such major tasks as the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure and public services, the reorganization of the administration and the health-care system, the planning and reconstruction of educational facilities and the resettlement of some 700,000 displaced persons.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

27. Despite the consequences of the war, however, Lebanon still had a dynamic economy and considerable growth potential. Given national security and a programme of economic stabilization, the country could once again become a major centre of growth in the Middle East. It was to be hoped that the Arab and International Fund for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon, which would help to revitalize the Lebanese economy, would be established in the near future. It was regrettable that there had been so little financial support for the country's reconstruction efforts, given that billions of dollars had poured into Lebanon in preceding years to feed the fires of destruction there.

28. The Government and people of Lebanon appreciated the relief and assistance efforts undertaken by the international community, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, and hoped that assistance would also be provided for the country's rehabilitation and reconstruction. He welcomed the nomination of the Resident Coordinator for Lebanon, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/173, and expressed the hope that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would soon be in a position to provide assistance. The revitalization of Lebanon's economy was an excellent investment in the future of the region, since Lebanon had played an important role in the modernization and development of that part of the world and still possessed the necessary dynamism and ambition to resume its constructive role.

29. Miss ULLOA (Ecuador) said that, in view of the natural disasters which the world was experiencing, her delegation supported the establishment of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, but believed that that initiative must not affect resources earmarked for development cooperation. The activities of UNDRO to alleviate the situation of disaster survivors and evacuees were to be commended.

30. In recent years, Ecuador had suffered various natural disasters, such as the El Niño phenomenon in 1982-1983 and the earthquake of March 1987. It had sought the cooperation of UNDRO, which had established a centre to mitigate the effects of natural diasters. In January 1987, UNDP, under the auspices of the United States Office of Diaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and with coordination and advice provided by UNDRO, had launched the Diaster Prevention and Preparedness Programmes in Ecuador and neighbouring countries, which studied the possible effects of diasters and prepared emergency plans to protect the population. Because of its mountainous and volcanic topography and its offshore climatic conditions (the warm El Niño current and the cold Humboldt current), Ecuador was subject to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and flooding. In anticipation of new natural diasters, the project included the micro-zone mapping of Guayaquil, Ecuador's most populous city, for use in urban planning. In Quito, the capital, measures were being taken to protect the population against landslides. Emergency plans were to be drawn up for various parts of the country, providing for evacuation from the affected zones and training of the authorities, students and the public for such

(Miss Ulloa, Ecuador)

eventualities. Given the scale and complexity of the project, the country could not implement it successfully on its own, and thus needed UNDP coordination as well as the services of experts and economic resources.

31. Miss Diop (Senegal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

32. Mr. TEFERRA (Ethiopia) said that the humanitarian situation around the world was a source of serious concern, owing to natural disasters and internecine conflicts. The Horn of Africa subregion continued to be the most seriously affected, as could be seen from the Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa. In recognition of that situation, the leaders of the subregion had met at Addis Ababa in April 1992 and adopted a common strategy for dealing with the humanitarian situation there. They had also adopted a declaration and a programme of action emphasizing the importance of the timely delivery of assistance, and had expressed their commitment to the observance and promotion of humanitarian norms and principles; they had called for the establishment of corridors of safety in order to reconcile the principle of sovereignty with the need to guarantee the delivery of relief supplies and had drawn the attention of the international community to the problems of displaced persons and refugees and to the need to offer humanitarian assistance along with long-term development assistance.

33. At the same meeting, they had also considered the most serious humanitarian challenge facing the Horn of Africa, namely the situation in Somalia, together with its impact on the countries bordering Somalia. A high-level standing committee on Somalia had been set up to coordinate the subregion's response to the crisis in that country and to complement regional and international efforts to deal with the situation. Another positive development was the coordination meeting on Somalia held in October 1992 at Geneva, at which a 100-day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian assistance had been approved. A follow-up conference was to be held at Addis Ababa on 30 November and 1 December 1992, and would be attended by donors, aid agencies, concerned countries as well as relevant Somali groupings. He reiterated Ethiopia's readiness to contribute to the success of that conference and to the entire humanitarian effort on behalf of Somalia.

34. The civil war in Ethiopia, which had lasted 30 years and had come to an end in 1991 with the overthrow of the military dictatorship, had left a legacy of ruin, poverty, famine, unemployment and disease. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia, which had taken control more than a year earlier, had inherited those problems, but intended to foster the establishment of a pluralist political system under which peace and stability could be maintained. The Government was faced with the problems generated by the demobilization of the army and the police force of the previous regime, the existence of millions of displaced persons as a result of the civil war, and the effects of drought and famine, problems exacerbated by the massive influx into Ethiopia of over 1 million refugees, most of them from Somalia. Ethiopia

(Mr. Teferra, Ethiopia)

was grateful for the assistance which the international community had provided to date, and looked forward to greater assistance in the future.

35. Mr. CATARINO (Portugal) said that his country was following the evolution of the situation in Mozambique with great interest and supported the activities that the United Nations was carrying out to complement the action already taken by the Government of Mozambique in the areas of food aid, health and nutrition, water supply and sanitation, agricultural production and refugees. Portugal was deeply concerned about the serious effects of the drought in southern Africa and was doing its utmost to assist the people of Mozambique. In 1991 it had provided emergency assistance worth $10 million to Mozambique. The General Peace Agreement for Mozambique signed in Rome in 1992 after long and complex negotiations had opened up new prospects for solving the political conflict, thus permitting the United Nations system to deliver relief assistance.

36. Portugal was also following developments in Angola with interest; it was to be hoped that the appropriate political conditions would soon prevail and lead to the economic and social rehabilitation of the country. The international community could play an important role in that respect by providing the necessary material, technical and financial support through the organizations of the United Nations system. Portugal hoped that a date could be set for the convening of a round-table donor conference for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Angola in cooperation with UNDP, the African Development Bank, the Portuguese Government and other interested countries. He also praised the efforts of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) and of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola. For its part, Portugal was doing its utmost to cooperate with Angola in various social and economic areas; in 1991, its contribution to Angola's rehabilitation had totalled more than $18 million.

37. Mr. BULL (Liberia) reiterated the gratitude of the people and Government of Liberia to donors, government and non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system for their continuing assistance to his country not only in meeting its critical humanitarian needs but also in attaining its development objectives. However, logistical and security problems continued to hamper relief operations and to hobble the transition to reconstruction and development.

38. At the previous session, his delegation had told the Committee it was confident that the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro agreement of 30 October 1991 would facilitate the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Liberia through the disarmament, demobilization and cantonment of the combatants in camps, which would permit the holding of democratic elections within six months. However, in view of the non-compliance with the terms of the agreement by the National Patriotic Front, the Committee of Five of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had met at Geneva in April 1992 and had called for the immediate implementation of the agreement.

(Mr. Bull, Liberia)

When the decisions adopted at that meeting were not implemented, the ECOWAS Assembly of Heads of State and Government had, at its July 1992 meeting, decided to request the Security Council to support the application of sanctions against any of the parties that did not comply with the agreement within 30 days. The Chairman of ECOWAS had been obliged to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly on 19 October 1992 which had reaffirmed the decisions adopted in July and had decided that if the Yamoussoukro agreement was not implemented within a period of two weeks, the Security Council would be formally requested to impose comprehensive sanctions that would be binding on the States members of the international community. On the eve of that meeting, the National Patriotic Front had launched a large-scale attack on Monrovia. Fighting was still going on in the capital, causing suffering and death among civilians. As a result of that serious situation, it had been announced that the ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs would meet shortly with the Security Council to consider the situation in Liberia. It was unfortunate that people had to resort to armed force in order to assume power. The Liberian people wished to be allowed to exercise its right to elect its leaders through free and fair elections.

39. As a result of those unexpected events, Liberia urgently needed humanitarian assistance to mitigate the suffering of the population. He therefore appealed to the international community to respond generously to that emergency situation and to support the programmes described in the Secretary-General's report on Liberia.

40. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation flatly rejected all the accusations made at the previous meeting by the representative of the United States of America, who had inexplicably placed the legitimate Government of the Sudan on an equal footing with the rebel forces operating in its territory that had gone to the extreme of kidnapping thousands of Sudanese children in order to force them to fight in their bands. He stressed in particular that no ethnic cleansing was practised in his country and explained that the resettlement efforts considered arbitrary by the United States delegation were actually transfers of people living in inhospitable regions to more habitable areas, and that the alleged killing of an individual for which the Sudanese authorities had been blamed was nothing more than the execution of a prisoner in conformity with his country's penal legislation after due process had been observed and the criminal had confessed. Moreover, the representative of the United States had deliberately overlooked and, of course, failed to condemn the killing by rebels of four United Nations staff members in southern Sudan. The freedom of movement of those seeking to study the situation objectively was not restricted in the Sudan, as the Ambassador of the United States and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator could attest.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.